

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Weekly Bulletin



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EDITOR

Venereal Disease Control—Past, Present and Future

The Venereal Disease Act was passed by the Legislature in May, 1937, was signed by the Governor, July 1, 1937, and became a law August 27, 1937.

The act appropriated \$150,000 for the biennium. This is supplemented by \$72,000 allocated to the state for venereal disease control by the United States Public Health Service for the fiscal year 1937-1938. In addition, approximately \$200,000 has been appropriated by local governmental agencies for the present fiscal year for venereal disease control.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACT

Under the provisions of the law, the Bureau of Venereal Diseases was created as a separate bureau within the California State Department of Public Health. The state program is administered by the State Department of Health under the direction of Dr. Walter M. Dickie, director of the department. The bureau was reestablished (since such a bureau was in existence from 1917 to 1920) on February 1, 1937, and Dr. Malcolm H. Merrill was appointed as chief of the bureau, using funds allotted to the state by the United States Public Health Service. (The bureau was thus established prior to the passage of the state legislation.)

The Bureau of Venereal Diseases functions as an integral part of the State Department of Public Health just as does the Bureau of Epidemiology, Bureau of Tuberculosis, Bureau of Food and Drug Inspection, etc.

Accomplishments to date are difficult to evaluate. Some of the more evident developments may be mentioned.

1. *Reporting System*—The system for reporting cases of venereal diseases has been simplified and modernized. A new report form has been prepared and issued. This new card was issued the latter part of June, at which time it was forwarded with a letter of explanation to the 12,500 medical practitioners in California.

Cases Reported—The number of cases reported has increased by approximately 50 per cent since these cards went into use. The total number of cases reported to the end of the third week in December were 16,361 cases of gonorrhea and 16,540 cases of syphilis or a total of 32,901 cases. Twenty thousand of these cases have been reported since July 1, 1937. These figures may be compared with a total of 23,843 total cases in 1936 and 23,591 total cases in 1935. This does not indicate an increased prevalence but better cooperation of the physicians in reporting. Surveys that have been carried on have indicated that prior to the present campaign less than 10 per cent of the cases treated by private physicians were rejected.

The epidemiological reports constitute a vital part of the reporting system. A card folder has been prepared and issued for this purpose. Each time a physician reports a case of venereal disease the local health department sends one of these card folders together with literature for the patient, to the physician. On these folders the physician reports sources of infection, contacts and cases lapsing from treatment. The local health department then investigates

these cases. Already many infections have been prevented as a result of these investigations. These cards have also been mailed to all physicians in the state. This entire reporting system together with printing of cards, and instructions to physicians have been developed in the past nine months.

2. *Clinics*—When the bureau was established, thirty-five venereal disease clinics were reporting at monthly intervals to the state department. The number has increased to seventy-seven. The records in many clinics were found to be poor and inadequate; wide variations existed. In order to improve the standard of the records and treatment clinic record forms were prepared, printed and made available to any clinic desiring to use them.

Many clinics were treating only patients fulfilling the requirements of residency and in many, attendance of all patients was discouraged. Almost all clinics have now adopted the policies concerning admission laid down by the Bureau of Venereal Diseases, namely:

- (a) Any patient for initial diagnosis and emergency treatment.
- (b) Any case referred by a private physician for special tests and consultation.
- (c) Any patient honestly unable to pay a private physician for treatment. Residency requirements completely abolished.

The next step has been to improve the general standard of medical care within the clinics. The Sacramento City Health Department Clinic was selected to determine the workability of various procedures of record keeping, treatment schedules, nursing procedures, etc. A medical officer of the bureau has been assigned to that clinic for the past three months. A complete reorganization has been effected. As a result of the fine cooperation of the city of Sacramento, the clinic has been remodeled, all admission fees abolished, all residency requirements eliminated and any patient desiring advice is courteously received. After diagnosis is made, patients that can afford private medical care are referred to private physicians.

The same general plan is being inaugurated in the Fresno County Hospital Clinic beginning January 3d and will be extended as rapidly as possible to all clinics in the state that will cooperate with the state department.

A unique plan of supplying physicians to these clinics has been worked out with the United States Public Health Service. Young physicians are employed by the state department as probationary public health workers and assigned to these clinics to devote their full time. As soon after employment as possible, these clinicians will be given a three months intensive post graduate course in the clinical management and public health control of venereal diseases. It is anticipated that each year to eighteen months, a new group of physicians will be employed to replace the trained physicians who go out into practice.

The State Department of Public Health is assisting these clinics by providing equipment, clinic record forms, in some instances, drugs and personnel.

Seventy-seven clinics now reporting to the state

department are administering approximately 25,000 treatments per month to indigent patients of the State of California. The report for November indicated that 25,023 treatments were given to about 11,000 patients. In these clinics 8186 Wassermann tests were run, 4453 microscopic examinations for gonococcus were made and 134 darkfield examinations for trapezoma pallidum were made. On a yearly basis, this will indicate approximately 300,000 tests a year. Surveys have indicated that approximately 25 per cent of cases are being treated in clinics and 75 per cent by private physicians.

3. *Nursing Personnel*—The addition of nursing personnel to the staff to take care of epidemiological work has had to await the civil service examinations. Within the next month it is anticipated that 12 to 15 such nurses can be assigned to various districts throughout the state to develop this phase of the program. Two such nurses have already been assigned to the San Francisco health department. Heretofore this phase of the work has been almost entirely lacking throughout most of the state.

4. *Distribution of Drugs*—Efforts are being made to render treatment of nonclinic patients easier to obtain. Private physicians are being provided with drugs for the treatment of indigent and part-pay patients. Since July 1, sufficient medication for approximately 50,000 treatments for syphilis has been dispensed by the Bureau of Venereal Diseases.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Physicians—An addressograph list of all physicians in the state has been prepared. Thus far two circular letters have gone out to physicians with inclosed cards and pamphlets.

A number of lectures have been presented before County Medical Society groups and there have been several showings of the U. S. Public Health Service film entitled "Syphilis of the Central Nervous System, a Preventable Disease."

Pamphlets—A series of seven pamphlets have been issued. Thus far approximately 125,000 pamphlets have been sent out from the state department. Over one-half of these have been mailed directly to individuals as a result of requests.

Lectures—Approximately 50 lectures have been delivered by various members of the department on Venereal Disease Control.

The U. S. Public Health Service film, "Syphilis, Its Nature, Prevention and Treatment," has been shown to over 50 audiences.

Pamphlets have been mailed to all libraries in the state and all have been advised to obtain copies of Dr. Thomas Parran's book entitled "Shadow on the Land, Syphilis."

Laboratory Activities—The activities of the state and local health department laboratories have been extended. The number of tests being run have increased by approximately 100 per cent in the past year. This same increase is reported by private laboratories.

In an effort to improve the standards of laboratory service throughout the state a service is to be developed within the state laboratory in which speci-

mens will be sent out to various laboratories for examination and check made upon the accuracy of these examinations. This is an extension of the general policy of the U. S. Public Health Service in which state laboratories are subjected periodically to such checks on the accuracy of their diagnostic tests.

PLANS FOR 1938

- a. *Continuation and Extension of Clinic Plans.*
- b. *Marked Extension of Epidemiological Services.*
- c. *Development of Educational Centers.* Venereal disease training centers will be established and there will be an extension of training service offered to professional groups throughout the state. This applies particularly to the young physicians being added to the venereal disease bureau staff, who will receive three months of specialized training some time within the next year.
- d. *Marked Extension of Educational Program.* For the month of January an intensive educational program is being promoted throughout southern California. A number of special posters are being prepared, particularly small enameled posters which will be distributed by the thousands throughout the state. These posters will be available for posting within the near future. There will be marked extension of lecture service, motion picture showings and other types of educational activity.
- e. *Extension of Activities to More Rural Districts.* There will be marked extension of the program to the rural districts of the state, particularly with reference to the distribution of free drugs and arrangements for the care of indigent patients either through the establishment of clinics or through arrangements with local physicians to take care of these cases.
- f. *Seminars—County Medical Societies.* A series of seminars is already being planned for County Medical Society groups, to be carried on during the months of May and June. The services of Dr. Udo Wile, professor of dermatology and syphilology of the University of Michigan Medical School, have been obtained for this purpose.
- g. *Surveys.* A number of surveys designed to determine the prevalence of venereal diseases have already been carried out in several counties of the state. These have indicated that there are between four and six cases per thousand of population constantly under treatment for these diseases. These services will be extended to include several of the larger cities of the state and to cover much of the rural districts of the state. They are designed to provide the department with more accurate information as to the extent of the problem and the points that can be most effectively attacked.
8. *Personnel.* The present personnel of the bureau is as follows: Chief of the bureau, two medical officers, two investigators, an educational director, an addressograph operator and mail clerk, two nurses, two stenographers and one venereal disease clinician. The personnel will be extended primarily by the addition of public health nurses and physicians. It is anticipated that some additional technicians will be employed to assist in the laboratory work.

ANOTHER HUMAN RABIES DEATH

A part-time postman in Los Angeles County, engaged in the delivery of "special delivery" or registered letters, was bitten above the left ankle by a dog, October 21-25, 1937. Little was thought of the wound, although the pants leg was torn. Tincture of iodine was applied and nothing more was thought about the matter. (Only fuming nitric acid is of value in cauterizing the wound caused by the bite of an animal that may transmit rabies.)

On the second day of December symptoms suggestive of rabies appeared in the postman and he was taken to a hospital where he died December 3. The onset was probably a few days before entrance to the hospital, as the patient complained of pain and numbness in the hands, arms, feet and legs. In the hospital there was a stiffness of neck and back muscles, nausea, difficulty in swallowing and convulsions.

Upon autopsy, portions of the patient's brain were removed and tissue used in animal inoculation, with results positive for rabies. Typical symptoms of rabies occurred in laboratory animals that were inoculated and Negri bodies were demonstrated by direct smears.

This is the third human death from rabies to have occurred in Los Angeles County since June, 1937. More than 2000 rabid animals were discovered in California during 1937. Quarantines against dogs are in effect in at least two counties of California. Further efforts in the control of stray dogs throughout the state are essential in order to control this preventable but highly disastrous disease.

COURSES IN DENTAL HYGIENE

Miss Harriet Fitzgerald, instructor in dental hygiene, University of California College of Dentistry, and dental hygienist, Berkeley public schools, will give a course in dental health education under the auspices of the Extension Division of the University of California. The first meeting will be held Thursday, January 27, 1938, from 7 to 8.30 p.m., Room 302, 540 Powell Street, San Francisco. There will be ten meetings on ten consecutive Thursdays at the same hour as the first meeting. Credit of one unit may be obtained upon completion of the course.

The work will consist of a study and discussion of methods and techniques used in dental education. The course is planned, primarily, for dentists, dental hygienists, physical education teachers and public health nurses who may be interested in the teaching principles involved in dental health education.

MORBIDITY**Complete Reports for Following Diseases for Week Ending January 1, 1938****Chickenpox**

301 cases: Alameda 10, Oakland 18, San Leandro 1, Calaveras County 4, El Cerrito 1, El Dorado County 1, Fresno County 1, Fresno 5, Bakersfield 1, Hanford 4, Lassen County 10, Los Angeles County 15, Alhambra 2, Arcadia 1, Beverly Hills 6, Claremont 1, Glendale 9, Long Beach 2, Los Angeles 29, Pasadena 4, Pomona 4, San Fernando 1, Santa Monica 1, Whittier 1, Torrance 3, Willits 1, Los Banos 1, Orange County 2, Santa Ana 10, Riverside 3, Sacramento 2, North Sacramento 3, Ontario 1, San Diego County 8, Chula Vista 1, Escondido 2, La Mesa 1, National City 1, San Diego 26, San Francisco 8, San Joaquin County 2, Lodi 2, Manteca 9, Stockton 3, San Luis Obispo 1, South San Francisco 1, Menlo Park 3, Santa Barbara County 1, Lompoc 2, Santa Barbara 19, Santa Maria 3, San Jose 2, Sunnyvale 1, Santa Cruz 4, Stanislaus County 12, Modesto 2, Tulare County 1, Ventura County 1, Fillmore 3, Oxnard 8, Santa Paula 8, Ventura 1, Yolo County 1, Woodland 6.

Diphtheria

45 cases: Oakland 3, San Leandro 1, Richmond 1, Fresno County 1, Fresno 1, Imperial County 1, Kern County 1, Los Angeles County 1, Culver City 1, Glendale 1, Los Angeles 17, Pomona 2, Orange County 1, Riverside County 1, Riverside 1, Sacramento 2, Escondido 1, San Diego 2, San Francisco 1, Santa Barbara 1, Sutter County 1, Tulare County 2, Porterville 1.

German Measles

14 cases: Berkeley 1, Inyo County 1, Kings County 3, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 2, Bell 1, Madera 1, Orange County 1, San Diego 1, San Jose 1, Oakdale 1.

Influenza

39 cases: Berkeley 2, Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles County 3, Los Angeles 13, Manhattan 1, San Gabriel 1, Whittier 3, Riverside County 2, Riverside 1, Sacramento 1, Ontario 1, San Diego 1, San Luis Obispo County 2, Gilroy 2, Trinity County 3, Tulare County 1, Ventura 1.

Malaria

2 cases: San Joaquin County 1, Tulare County 1.

Measles

62 cases: Alameda County 1, Alameda 1, Oakland 1, Calaveras County 1, Fresno 1, Kern County 1, Kings County 4, Hanford 1, Los Angeles County 9, Covina 1, La Verne 1, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 6, Manhattan 1, Pomona 1, Sierra Madre 1, Los Banos 1, Merced 1, Anaheim 1, La Habra 1, San Diego 3, San Francisco 1, Tulare County 18, Exeter 1, Ventura County 2, Yolo County 1.

Mumps

163 cases: Oakland 3, Bakersfield 2, Tehachapi 16, Hanford 1, Los Angeles County 3, Glendale 5, Long Beach 5, Los Angeles 12, Monrovia 1, Redondo 1, South Gate 1, Madera County 1, Madera 1, Orange County 3, Anaheim 12, Orange 1, Sacramento County 1, Sacramento 3, San Diego County 6, San Diego 27, San Francisco 1, San Luis Obispo County 1, San Mateo County 1, South San Francisco 1, Santa Barbara County 1, Lompoc 6, Santa Barbara 2, Santa Maria 4, Santa Clara County 1, Sonoma County 3, Stanislaus County 23, Tulare County 14.

Pneumonia (Lobar)

88 cases: Berkeley 1, Oakland 5, Fresno County 3, Kern County 1, Bakersfield 2, Kings County 1, Lake County 1, Los Angeles County 11, Compton 2, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 29, Monrovia 3, Pasadena 1, San Fernando 1, Madera County 1, Riverside County 2, Riverside 1, Sacramento 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 18, Paso Robles 1, Santa Clara County 1.

Scarlet Fever

193 cases: Alameda 1, Oakland 6, Fresno County 1, Fresno 3, Willows 1, Kern County 7, Kings County 3, Lassen County 14, Los Angeles County 19, Alhambra 1, Beverly Hills 1, Burbank 1, Glendale 3, Huntington Park 1, Inglewood 1, La Verne 2, Long Beach 5, Los Angeles 29, Montebello 2, Pasadena 3, Madera County 2, Merced County 2, Merced 3, Nevada City 1, Orange County 2, Orange 1, Santa Ana 4, La Habra 1, Placer County 1, Plumas County 3, Riverside County 2, Perris 1, San Bernardino 3, San Diego County 1, National City 2, San Diego 1, San Francisco 6, San Joaquin County 4, Lodi 1, Stockton 6, San Luis Obispo County 1, Daly City 5, Redwood City 1, San Mateo 1, Santa Barbara 1, San Jose 1, Santa Cruz County 1, Santa Cruz 1, Siskiyou County 6, Stanislaus County 1, Modesto 1, Oakdale 1, Sutter County 1, Yuba City 1, Tulare County 9, Exeter 1, Ventura County 2, Oxnard 3, Ojai 4.

Smallpox

23 cases: Fresno County 5, Fowler 1, Fresno 1, Kings County 1, Hanford 1, San Joaquin County 1, Tulare County 13.

Typhoid Fever

11 cases: Fresno County 2, Nevada County 1, San Bernardino 3, San Diego 1, Tulare County 3, California 1.*

Whooping Cough

221 cases: Alameda 1, Berkeley 5, Oakland 7, Alpine County 2, El Cerrito 3, Richmond 2, Fresno County 1, Los Angeles County 7, Claremont 2, Los Angeles 17, Monrovia 1, Montebello 1, Redondo 1, San Fernando 1, Maywood 1, Bell 1, Madera County 1, Merced County 2, King City 9, Brea 2, Santa Ana 1, Sacramento 25, Ontario 1, San Diego County 3, Escondido 3, National City 12, San Diego 31, San Francisco 22, San Joaquin County 10, Manteca 6, Stockton 10, San Luis Obispo County 3, Paso Robles 7, Burlingame 1, Santa Barbara County 1, Santa Cruz County 2, Watsonville 3, Tulare County 1, Ventura County 9, Davis 3.

Meningitis (Epidemic)

2 cases: Imperial County 1, Riverside County 1.

Dysentery (Amoebic)

4 cases: Colusa 1, Whittier 1, Siskiyou County 2.

Dysentery (Bacillary)

11 cases: Fresno County 8, Lynwood 1, Sonoma County 1, Tulare County 1.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum

2 cases: Los Angeles.

Pellagra

One case: Redondo.

Poliomyelitis

5 cases: Colusa County 1, Los Angeles County 1, Los Angeles 1, Sacramento 1, Santa Paula 1.

Trachoma

7 cases: Los Angeles County 1, Signal Hill 2, Modoc County 2, Riverside County 2.

Paratyphoid Fever

One case: San Mateo.

Trichinosis

2 cases: San Francisco 1, San Jose 1.

Food Poisoning

9 cases: Vernon 2, Fullerton 7.

Undulant Fever

2 cases: Long Beach 1, Woodland 1.

Tularemia

2 cases: Inyo County 1, Tulare County 1.

Actinomycosis

One case: Burbank.

Septic Sore Throat

4 cases: Bakersfield 2, Sierra Madre 1, San Francisco 1.

Rabies (Human)

One case: Los Angeles County.

Rabies (Animal)

25 cases: Imperial County 1, Los Angeles County 2, Culver City 1, Los Angeles 10, Pasadena 1, San Gabriel 1, Santa Monica 2, Pacific Grove 1, Redlands 1, Menlo Park 1, Palo Alto 1, Ventura County 2, Yolo County 1.

* Cases charged to "California" represent patients ill before entering the state or those who contracted their illness traveling about the state throughout the incubation period of the disease. These cases are not chargeable to any one locality.

WELL BABY CONFERENCES

During October the physicians of the Bureau of Child Hygiene conducted 182 conferences in 37 counties of the state. Physical examinations were made of 3017 children. Of these, 1436 were examined for the first time, and 1581 were return examinations. As a result, 1780 medical defects were discovered and referred to the family physicians. A total of 1283 defects correctable by hygienic methods were discussed with the parents.

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